

Social Science

(Constitutional Design)
(Democratic Politics – I)

Question 1:

Here are some false statements. Identify the mistake in each case and rewrite these correctly based on what you have read in this chapter.

(a) Leaders of the freedom movement had an open mind about whether the country should be democratic or not after independence.

Answer: This is a true statement.

(b) Members of the Constituent Assembly of India held the same views on all provisions of the Constitution.

Answer: Members of the Constituent Assembly of India had different opinions on various provisions of the constitution.

(c) A country that has a constitution must be a democracy.

Answer: This cannot be said with surety; in the context of information given in this chapter.

(d) Constitution cannot be amended because it is the supreme law of a country.

Answer: Constitution can be amended to keep up with the changes in aspirations of the society.

Question 2:

Which of these was the most salient underlying conflict in the making of a democratic constitution in South Africa?

- (a) Between South Africa and its neighbours
- (b) Between men and women
- (c) Between the white majority and the black minority
- (d) Between the coloured minority and the black majority

Answer:

- (d) Between the coloured minority and the black majority

Question 3:

Which of these is a provision that a democratic constitution does not have?

- (a) Powers of the head of the state
- (b) Name of the head of the state
- (c) Powers of the legislature
- (d) Name of the country

Answer:

- (b) Name of the head of the state

Question 4:

Match the following leaders with their roles in the making of the Constitution:

Column I	Column II
(a) Motilal Nehru	1. President of the Constituent Assembly
(b) B R Ambedkar	2. Member of the Constituent Assembly
(c) Rajendra Prasad	3. Chairman of the Drafting Committee
(d) Sarojini Naidu	4. Prepared a Constitution for India in 1928

Answer: (a) - 4, (b) - 3, (c) - 1, (d) - 2

Question 5:

Read again the extracts from Nehru's speech 'Tryst with Destiny' and answer the following:

- (a) Why did Nehru use the expression "not wholly or in full measure" in the first sentence?

Answer: The task of building a nation is a gargantuan task which cannot be fulfilled in one's lifetime. Hence Nehru had used the expression, "not wholly or in full measure, but substantially".

(b) What pledge did he want the makers of the Indian Constitution to take?

Answer: He wanted them to take the pledge of building a nation in which there would not be a single person with tears in his eyes. He wanted them to understand the huge responsibility which destiny had thrust upon them.

(c) “The ambition of the greatest man of our generation has been to wipe every tear from every eye”. Who was he referring to?

Answer: He was referring to Mahatma Gandhi.

Question 6:

Here are some of the guiding values of the Constitution and their meaning. Rewrite them by matching them correctly.

Column I	Column II
(a) Sovereign	1. Government will not favour any religion
(b) Republic	2. People have the supreme right to make decisions.
(c) Fraternity	3. Head of the state is an elected person.
(d) Secular	4. People should live like brothers and sisters.

Answer 6: (a) - 2, (b) - 3, (c) - 4, (d) - 1

Question 7:

A friend from Nepal has written you a letter describing the political exercises situation there. Many political parties are opposing the rule of the king. Some of them say that the existing constitution given by the monarch can be amended to allow more powers to elected representatives. Others are demanding a new Constituent Assembly to write a republican constitution. Reply to your friend giving your opinions on the subject.

Answer 7: Both the options are plausible. If the existing constitution is proper then it can be amended to include more powers to elected representatives. If the existing constitution is full of loopholes, then a new constitution should be drafted. For this, a Constituent Assembly should be formed by including the elected representatives and they should collectively decide about a particular option.

Question 8:

Here are different opinions about what made India a democracy. How much importance would you give to each of these factors?

(a) Democracy in India is a gift of the British rulers. We received training to work with representative legislative institutions under the British rule.

Answer: The importance of this fact cannot be ignored. We should acknowledge that we learnt many good things from the British rulers and democracy was one of them.

(b) Freedom Struggle challenged the colonial exploitation and denial of different freedoms to Indians. Free India could not be anything but democratic.

Answer: Freedom struggle was important in spreading the idea of nationalism in India and inculcating the practice of making decisions by consensus.

(c) We were lucky to have leaders who had democratic convictions. The denial of democracy in several other newly independent countries shows the important role of these leaders.

Answer: We were indeed lucky that we did not have leaders who were autocratic. India's freedom struggle is the only example of a bloodless freedom struggle in the contemporary history. This could be possible because our nationalist leaders had the maturity to listen to others' views.

Question 9:

Read the following extract from a conduct book for 'married women', published in 1912. 'God has made the female species delicate and fragile both physically and emotionally, pitiably incapable of self-defence. They are destined thus by God to remain in male protection – of father, husband and son – all their lives. Women should, therefore, not despair, but feel obliged that they can dedicate themselves to the service of men'. Do you think the values expressed in this para reflected the values underlying our constitution? Or does this go against the constitutional values?

Answer 9: The constitution treats every citizen equally irrespective of gender distinction. Hence this paragraph does not reflect the underlying value in our constitution.

Question 10:

Read the following statements about a constitution. Give reasons why each of these is true or not true.

- (a) The authority of the rules of the constitution is the same as that of any other law.
- (b) Constitution lays down how different organs of the government will be formed.
- (c) Rights of citizens and limits on the power of the government are laid down in the constitution.
- (d) A constitution is about institutions, not about values.

Answer 10:

- (a) This is not a true statement since the authority of the rules of the Constitution is much more than that of any other law.
- (b) No, it is not correct because our Constitution lays down how different organs of the Government will be formed.
- (c) This is a correct statement since in our Constitution rights of citizens and limits on the power of the government have been clearly laid down.
- (d) A constitution is about institutions through which different values are being inculcated.